

JAZZ HISTORY TIMELINE

The Jazzistry story begins some four hundred years ago when the English, French, Spanish, Portuguese and Dutch competed for control of the Atlantic slave trade. It's estimated that by 1860, more than 10 million Africans had been captured and transported to the Americas. This human atrocity ravaged populations primarily in regions we now call Ghana, Togo, Benin and Nigeria. They were transported mostly to the Caribbean Islands and Spanish colonies in Central and South America. Only an estimated 6 percent of these victims of slavery were traded in British North America. Far from homogeneous, their diverse linguistic, ethnic, and religious origins were all reflected in their musical traditions.

1700's

By 1750, enslaved Africans constituted 20 percent of the population in British North America, almost 240,000 people. The majority lived in the Southern colonies though slavery also existed in Northern colonies. At the same time, particularly in Maryland, a small population of free blacks did exist.

Because England's industrial revolution was funded by profits from the British slave trade and from colonial America's slave-produced sugar and tobacco crops, British slave ships were bringing as great a number as 50,000 enslaved Africans to the New World each year by the 1790's.

Slavery took a slightly different cultural turn in the French-dominated city of New Orleans, founded in 1718. Here free colored people called Creoles co-existed with whites and slaves. Creoles were the racially mixed offspring of French slave masters and became free when, according to custom, French slave owners would free their slaves immediately prior to their own death. With freedom, Creoles were able to achieve a level of education, opportunity and wealth that approximated the status and rights of white people.

However, when the Spanish took over New Orleans in 1764, Creoles lost their social and economic status, a change that forced them to look for work. Many became traveling musicians, a phenomenon that would evolve into the Southern minstrel show. These Creole musicians and their descendants became the primary inventors of early jazz.

At the same time, Connecticut and Rhode Island were the first northern colonies to initiate the idea of gradual emancipation and in 1774, the first laws prohibiting slavery were passed.

1800's

Eleven million Africans had been forcibly taken from their homelands and an estimated 600,000 had been sold into slavery in North America by 1807, when the British abolished their slave trade. In fact, the period from 1798 to 1808 was the largest slave importation into the United States, totaling about 200,000. Even though United States citizens were prohibited from exporting slaves, the slave trade continued within the country. Folk music based on African forms and plantation songs sung by slaves was the African American music that rose out of slavery. Minstrelsy was white music meant to copy plantation songs

During the Civil War

The origin of the term "Jim Crow" comes from a minstrel show routine called "Jump Jim Crow" ridiculing black people and popularized in the 1830's. These deeply rooted attitudes persisted long after the Civil War. Jim Crow segregation and discrimination policies throughout the South severely restricted the lives and freedoms of African Americans and caused many to flee the South.

After the Civil War

Immediately after the Civil War, in 1867, black men cast ballots for the first time. The passage of the 15th Amendment, granted all rights of citizenship to men born in the US (except American Indians) and to men naturalized. Two hundred sixty five black men (107 were born slaves, 40 served in the Union Army) were elected as delegates to ten state conventions.

In the late 1860's, Northern religious societies founded dozens of black colleges and schools across the South, including Fisk University in Tennessee, with the purpose of educating black students to become teachers. The 1871 concert tour of The Jubilee Singers of Fisk University marks an historic threshold because the work songs and spirituals sung in this choir's repertoire provided white audiences with their very first exposure to the lives and music of black Americans.

In the 1890's, the earliest forms of jazz began to emerge in New Orleans, a multi-racial and multi-cultural French-ruled city with a social order that demanded music and revelry. Creole musicians were combining the elements of West African work songs, slave spirituals, minstrel and vaudeville shows, and rural blues expression with the European brass band instruments and harmonies. This newly born hybrid music filled the streets of New Orleans on every occasion from parades to funeral marches. Blues develops and is complete by 1910. Ragtime develops and is the most popular music in America between 1900 and 1911.

1900's

Marching band music, Ragtime and the Blues begin to be fused into early Jazz roots. The magical quality of ragtime's syncopated rhythm captured the hearts of millions of Americans. It distinguished the new sounds of early jazz, spreading the music up and down the Mississippi River on the riverboats, which provided a boon to the mobility of America's population. Besides the riverboat, it was sale of sheet music that helped the spread of ragtime. Sheet music was sold to millions of Americans (mostly women) who wanted to play it on their pianos in their homes.

Ragtime and New Orleans jazz (more frequently known as "Dixieland Jazz") were popularized nationwide in the early decades of the twentieth century, the first forms of black music to cross over into white America. Pioneers like Scott Joplin- "The King of Ragtime", Jelly Roll Morton, Ma Rainey and W.C. Handy- "Father of the Blues", paved a road on which many others after them would travel.

America's racially segregated society was reflected in its segregated military. When the United States entered World War I in 1917, Colonel Hayward was a white officer who persuaded the army to recruit large numbers of black troops. He had been greatly impressed by the bravery of the black soldiers he had commanded in the Spanish American War. Hayward first recruited a widely acclaimed orchestra leader from Harlem, James Reese Europe, as an officer and regimental bandleader. Europe then recruited expert African American and Caribbean musicians for his band, and wrote jazz arrangements of the music. Because of Lieutenant Europe's band, over 370,000 black men enlisted in the Jim Crow army and navy.

The black soldiers of Jim Europe's 369th Regiment experienced vicious racism during their basic training in South Carolina, from both local people and white soldiers. To avoid a brewing racial confrontation, the army shipped the "369th" to the action in Europe, to become the first American soldiers to reach war-torn France. They fought bravely and valiantly, saw 200 days of continuous trench warfare. Known as the "Harlem Hellfighters," the fame of the 369th soared when two members of the regiment were awarded France's highest military medal for bravery, the Croix de Guerre. When they weren't in battle, the 369th played its sensational new music and won the hearts of the French everywhere they went. It was the first jazz heard in Europe. As a remarkable military battalion combined with their marching band fame, they became the toast of Europe. Immediately after the war, the 369th was celebrated at home in victory parades in many cities, playing jazz music.

1910 – 1920's

Jazz is born in New Orleans via a combination of black and creole music. This decade is marked by the newly invented phonograph and radio that became the rage in homes across America. For the first time, Southern blues singers whose techniques and songs were rooted in African American oral and musical traditions, were recorded and then, broadcast on national radio.

In New Orleans, jazz is the thing and the Jazz Age is born from here. Also in NYC, Harlem's fashionable night spots, caused blacks and whites to flock to Harlem's clubs where they heard the legendary bands like bandleaders, Cab Calloway and Edward "Duke" Ellington. In addition to black entertainers, Harlem attracted black poets, painters, writers and intellectuals, forging an unprecedented and prolific creative movement called the Harlem Renaissance that spanned two decades, the fruits of which have altered American arts and cultural traditions forever.

1930's

Swing is king and this is the only time that Jazz and popular are the same thing. After the stock market crash of 1929, the Great Depression created an era of severe economic suffering. At the same time, the hardship of the times enabled the cultural power of African Americans to drive a small wedge into the wall of racism separating whites from blacks. It was the optimistic music of all black Big Bands that boosted the morale of white America and transformed American popular culture forever. Swing's popularity launched the careers of jazz musicians, both black and white. Benny Goodman, a white clarinetist and bandleader, was the first to form a racially integrated band-a quartet with black jazz musicians Lionel Hampton, Charlie Christian and Teddy Wilson and white drummer Gene Krupa -to perform before a rapt audience at Carnegie Hall in 1938. This was a decade prior to the integration of major league baseball with Jackie Robinson.

1940's

1,750,000 black people left the South as part of the Great Migration, They were seeking better lives in northern industrial cities like Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, and New York. Despite the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments, the United States government had abandoned Southern black people to an apartheid South of white supremacy marked by railroad and streetcar segregation, segregated justice, lynching and riots.

Bebop is born. It is later called simply Bop. The economics and rationing of World War II caused the recording industry to cease, but the jazz music transmitted across radio waves was essential to uplifting the American spirit both at home and overseas. During this time, many black jazz musicians traveled around the world, gaining exposure to new ethnic and cultural music traditions, adding to their notion of music of the day more complexity and an impetus to push for change.

Bebop was such a musical revolution in the early '40s, fathered by young black jazz musicians in New York City who were tired of the predictability of Swing and wanted more freedom than white Big Band audiences would allow. Most responsible for this radical movement were Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, Thelonius Monk, Bud Powell, Kenny Clarke, Max Roach and Ray Brown. In addition to a new music full of complex rhythms, harmonies and improvisation, Beboppers created their own slang, attire

and life style. Despite white America's initial resistance to Bebop, it flourished in small clubs, in late night jam sessions, and endured for two generations to become the principal musical language of jazz musicians worldwide. Then, in 1948, the record industry gave birth to the revolutionary long playing records, known as LPs!

1950's

Hard Bop or Funk and Cool Jazz take over. America, post-World War II, was launched on an upward economic spiral that paralleled the growth of jazz in many ways. The Beat Generation turned jazz into a language of social and political protest. East Coast Hard Bop reconnected jazz with the blues. West Coast Jazz turned mellow. The Newport Jazz Festival was born in 1954, an idea that came from Europe and would spawn American jazz festivals for years to come. And finally, rock and roll arrived--the child of boogie-woogie, rhythm and blues, and country music--to infatuate America's youth and further shape the popular music of Europe.

1960's

Modal and Free Jazz find followers. As the Civil Rights Movement and resistance to the Vietnam War intensified, jazz music truly reflected the mood of America's political climate. Soul jazz became the music of the Black Power movement. Free jazz invented a musical vocabulary for revolutionary expression, and Avant Garde jazz trenched up the old to use with the new, combining contemporary instrumental formulas with the sounds of early jazz. Finally, a technological revolution produced the electronic instruments and rock rhythms that steered jazz toward Fusion, which was the predecessor to Rap that would emerge in the '70s.

1970's to Present Day

In 1971, the death of Louis Armstrong was mourned worldwide, and he was lauded as the most beloved giant of jazz. In the 70's Jazz fuses with one of its derivatives (Rock) to form Jazz-Rock or Fusion. Bebop made a comeback, as young musicians looked back and at the same time forward with the invention of the compact disc in 1983.

Jazz became a universal idiom in the 80's, and continues to develop today, often as the vanguard, in conservatories, schools, clubs, concert halls, and recording studios. Hip-Hop and other forms emerge. Hard Bop has a revival. As always, the unique language of jazz melds histories, traditions, improvisation and experimentation in order to express the most fundamental conditions of the human experience. It is an art form treasured around the world as one of America's greatest legacies and gifts!

African and European Fusion

- African music featured complex cross-rhythms, slurs, melisma, falsetto, vibrato and simple melodies.
- Call and response form was employed. The leader would throw out a line and a chorus responded.
- Griots were African historians who kept complex records in their heads and related them via song. The Blues form may have derived from this West African culture.
 - Derision songs were popular.
- European music featured complex melodies and simple rhythms.

Characteristics of Early African-American Music

- Off beat and syncopated to simulate the complex cross-rhythms.
- Based primarily on the pentatonic scale and other truncated scales.
- Employed blue notes (flatted thirds, sevenths and later fifths) to eliminate half steps.
 - Ensemble style singing employed (no true harmony).

Types of Early African-American Music

- Work songs were sung to ease the pain of hard work.
 - Field hollers.
 - Boat songs.
 - Corn shucking songs, etc.
- Spiritual songs were songs based on white hymns and spirituals meant to praise God.
- Lining out, a call and response form derived from African and British roots, was used in white and black churches because there was not enough money for hymn books.
 - Camp meetings and ring shouts became popular in black and white churches.
- In the early 1800s, white and black churches split and their Spirituals took separate paths.
 - Street vendors' songs were another form of early African-American music.
 - There were also play songs.

- Prison songs, which contributed to the Blues, were heard after the Civil War and Reconstruction.

Four distinct fusions have occurred:

- Early African-American folk music was a fusion of African and European musics to form work songs, etc.
- Europeanized African-American folk music was a fusion of African-American folk and European music to form Spirituals, Minstrelsy, Vaudeville, etc.
 - Ragtime was another fusion of African-American folk with European band music.
 - Jazz-Rock or Fusion is a fusion of Jazz and its distant derivative, Rock.

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Online Resources and links

http://www.pbs.org/wnet/aaworld/timeline/building_03.html

<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~UG01/hughes/time.html>

<http://www.princetonol.com/groups/iad/lessons/middle/afri-am.htm>

<http://web.cocc.edu/cagatucci/classes/hum211/timelines/htimeline3.htm>

http://www.chatham.edu/PTI/AmericanHistorythroughArt/Amhisabstract_00.htm

<http://www.africanaonline.com/arts.htm>

<http://www.allaboutjazz.com/php/article.php?id=1969>

<http://pbskids.org/jazz/time/>

Slave Songs of the United States

(Published by William Francis Allen, Charles Pickford Ware and Lucy McKim Garrison)

Slave Songs of the Georgia Sea Islands (Published by Lydia Parrish)